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*Polit. Pamph. vol 133.*  
**OPPOSITION** *k*

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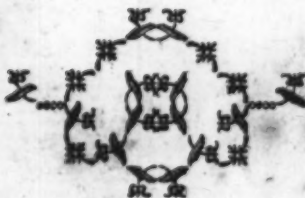
**PATRIOTISM.**

WITH SOME

**A D V I C E**

CONCERNING

**PARTY-WRITINGS.**



**L O N D O N,**

Printed for T. EVANS, in King-Street, Covent-Garden.

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# OPPOSITION

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## PATRIOTISM, &c.

**W**E have been long alarmed (I hope we are now tired) with terrible representations of men in power, their evil designs and mistakes, their corruptions at home, their blunders abroad; and public Liberty, which is now stronger than ever it was in any country or age, has been lamented, as almost expiring. The ministers have been abused for every good action which they did or attempted, and even for bad actions which they neither attempted nor intended.

Such universal condemnation was such an evident mark of ill-will and partiality, as could not escape our notice and censure. It was as little artful as it was de-

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cent or true. A cunning calumniator will allow some good qualities in the object he abuses, on purpose to be believed when he charges him with bad qualities. But to condemn in the lump, to make men hideous and wicked without allay, will ever and justly pass for *reviling*; and a reviler, when he is known to be such, foregoes the success of his trade: and it will then be seen that injustice and misrepresentation are not Patriotism.

It could not but raise our indignation to be told that we were slaves, whilst we could not but feel ourselves in possession of the highest liberty that ever people enjoyed. It could not but raise our laughter, to hear those ministers represented as fools and blunderers, who were continually defeating all the efforts of such as so represent them. It could not but move our contempt to see the government decried as impotent and hobbling, by some, who, though very able men, could not, in one instance, shake or change that same weak government, which according to them was tumbling of itself.



They could not pretend that they had not fair play, and full room to exert all their forces; the press was open, their tongues were free, and freely they used both. They might rail as loud as they pleased, inveigh without controul; nor did they at all spare or bury such valuable talents. Now what advances have these dreadful assailants made? what advantages have they gained against a ministry so powerfully attacked, so tottering, and so decried?

All discerning men know how natural it is, at least how common, for men out of place to rail at those who are in. But if the people be well governed, it becomes them to support and wish well to such as so govern them. Can they recollect that ever they were better when others were in place, even those who are now out? Had they then more ease, fewer taxes, or greater liberty? Some who would make them sick of their present happy condition, were their governors when their condition was not better, yet thought their condition very good till they were out;

and then, as their own was altered, so they seemed to think that of the people.

If the possession of place influences men, does not want of place influence them as much? But this truth, so glaringly evident, is never owned by those in whom it most evidently appears. Places, all places, as soon as they go out of them, become presently, in their stile, dangerous, infectious, and even criminal. Yet the moment before, whilst they themselves were in place, they never once mentioned places in that stile; nor do they ever confess, that when they were in place their places had any undue influences upon *them*, though it is what they boldly charge upon all that remain in place, or come into *their* places.

Is not this apparent mockery and partiality? Is it not passionate and partial judgment? Is it not pronouncing the very same thing to be guilt in others which in themselves was innocence; and determining guilt and innocence not from the nature of things, but from the names and persons of men? By what rule do they  
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judge of others? And did they find themselves corrupted by place and preferment? If they did not, why may not others be as uncorrupt as they? And is it not notoriously selfish, as well as uncharitable, thus to set themselves above all other men?

Places and pensions are an old cry. Can there be any government without places? And one of the greatest malecontents and professed patriots during the reign of king William had a constant and annual pension, whilst he was loudly railing at pensions and corruption. Many who then railed most against pensions at home, were shrewdly suspected of receiving pensions from abroad. Such a profusion of loidores was seen in England (no other ways to be accounted for than by remittances to the French ambassador here, for carrying on the designs of France amongst us) that a million of guineas were coined out of them in so small a space as six months.

Many people think that there is an inherent virtue in opposition, nay, a sort of divinity in it, and are apt to treat such as are violent in it as something more than men,

men, without ever distinguishing between opposition to unjust measures, and opposition to just as well as unjust. Can there be a more unjust thing than opposing measures necessary to the support and being of a state? And is not such opposition destructive of patriotism?

It is ridiculous as well as dangerous to estimate the virtues of men by their vigour or eagerness in opposing a ministry. The *best ministers* have been often opposed by the *worst men*; even bad ministers have been opposed by men as bad as themselves; and the worst men have always cloathed their opposition with the cloak of public good, with tenderness and compassion to the people, and a zeal for relieving them, by abolishing taxes, and for securing and increasing their privileges. But ambition, which rarely owns its true name, generally chuses that of *patriotism*.

Famous is the story in Philip de Comines of the *War of the Public Good*, undertaken by the *great men* of France, *avowedly* for rescuing their country from  
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the oppression of Lewis the Eleventh, a prince who by his tyranny gave sufficient provocation to such a war, but had likewise address enough to ward it off, not by lessening public burthens, not by relieving the people, not by removing grievances, or abolishing taxes, but by *gratifying the great men* (the *patriots* of that time) with great places and pensions; and these great men and patriots were not ashamed, after all their bustle, all their boasted disinterestedness and public spirit, to leave the poor people (who had idolized them) to groan under the rod of that fell tyrant.

John duke of Burgundy, that bloody man, who committed so many ravages and murders in France, who butchered the first prince of the blood, and was the author of so much public confusion and desolation, set out with a pretence of zeal against taxes. That pretence gained him high popularity; that popularity enabled him to ruin France, which for many years he made a scene of blood and misery. It is needless to add, that though the public good, *patriotism*, filled his mouth, yet



yet nothing in reality prompted him but flaming ambition, and revenge against the duke of Orleans for personal indignities.

When the multitude are once gained and inflamed by any chief, they are easily incited to what they at first never intended, and to follow him blindly and furiously, though their passions and views be all the while quite different from his. His business is to make them believe (nor is it a hard task) that he has no design or interest but theirs, till at last they sacrifice all for his interest against their own. For they therefore believe him a *patriot* because they see him angry and opposing: a very false rule to judge by; but the populace seldom have any truer.

Is the most righteous administration ever free from opposition, or the most virtuous minister from reproach? I wish they were, but cannot recollect that ever they were. Cicero was banished his country for having saved it, and the worst man in Rome had popularity enough to ruin the best. Even Catiline was a strenuous opposer of power, boldly charged the government

vernment with oppression, assumed the airs and language of a *patriot*, and expressed great zeal for liberty; so did his execrable gang and followers. They were all opposers, all patriots. Was the lord-chancellor Clarendon, that good Englishman and uncorrupt minister, protected by the integrity of his administration, and the cleanness of his hands, against calumny and opposers? So far otherwise, that, with all his services and innocence, he fell a sacrifice to those opposers, who having afterwards engrossed to themselves the power, which by their wicked arts and lies he had lost, made it soon effectually appear, by their abandoned measures, by their rapaciousness, and schemes of public servitude, how naturally they had hated and opposed a minister so unlike themselves. Yet bad as they were, and good as he was, they had succeeded in rendering him unpopular; for they spared no sort of popular falsehoods and aspersions to make him odious.

Did lord-chancellor Somers, did the lord-treasurer Godolphin, with all their

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virtues

virtues and abilities, with all their public spirit, with all the integrity and success of their administration, escape reproach and opposition? So far otherwise, that they were most virulently assaulted and vilified; one of them impeached, both of them exposed in libels to the mob, and both forced to retire.

What follows then? Is all opposition to be discouraged and abolished? God forbid. Let oppression and oppressors, and every unjust administration, be forever opposed. But where the laws rule, where liberty flourishes, and where a legal administration prevails, *general opposition* ought to be out of countenance and cease. When under such a situation, the opposition continues constant and furious; all good, all calm and disinterested men will condemn it: even the vulgar will at last cease to mind it, and they who are the authors of it will make but an ill figure with posterity. It may flourish amongst the multitude for a while, but in time it will lose its force, and at last grow contemptible, or be forgot.

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It requires but a small degree of sagacity to distinguish between public zeal and private passion, however the latter may assume the name of the former; and in an opposition which *continually* rages, it will easily be seen that it is *men* and not *measures* that give the real offence, especially when the opposers have themselves formerly approved and promoted the very same measures which they afterwards oppose. When men act this inconsistent part, a very plain understanding will find out the true cause of such different conduct. Sophistry and explanations will not do: it will still be remembered that this *new love* for our country did not appear, at least in the same light, till we were first grown very *angry* at *particular men*, and that *such public spirit* seems to rise out of *private resentment*.

I wonder why gentlemen, who violently dislike ministers, would ever be ministers (as some of them have been, and perhaps are not utterly bent against being so for the time to come), or why they did not, when they were so, propose these generous plans

of reformation which they are so ready to offer when they are not ministers, and consequently have not the same power and opportunity of accomplishing. Would it not seem to follow, that they then thought the same either unnecessary or impracticable? And if they thought so then, is it not very unfair to expect from ministers in place what they themselves, when there, found needless or impossible? And is it not very wicked to rail at them for not performing impossibilities?

Another inconsistency, no less flagrant, has been, their continual outcry against corruption at elections, and their continual practice of it. If they could do without it, why did they practise it? If it was inevitable, why did they rail at it? Or was it right in them, and in all others criminal? This likewise puts me in mind of the outcry against the corruption of boroughs in former reigns, when they, who were the loudest in that cry, were openly guilty of the most dangerous corruption with relation to boroughs, and to all elections in general; for, when  
under



under this pretence they had voted any man out of parliament, whom they did not like there, they shamefully postponed ordering the writ for a new election, as often as they apprehended that the same or any other person equally out of their favour, would be chosen there.

General complaints against public mismanagement and male-administration are easily made, and therefore very common, even in the best of times. The late earl of Godolphin was charged with not having accounted to the public for above thirty-five millions of public money, though by the public accounts it appeared that he had fairly applied every shilling; yet such was the bitterness and dishonesty of party and his enemies, that he was branded to the nation, in a vote of the House of Commons, with the above false and monstrous alumnny, which, at least for a while, was, by the greatest part of the nation, believed, as a proof of the notorious injustice and fury, as well as the blind credulity of party. Yet these his enemies set up for rescuing their country from rapine  
and

and misrule, and had raised a cry that the nation and the church were just sinking; that the former ministry had been corrupters of the legislature, betrayers of their trust, and enemies to their country; that they were odious to God and man, and Heaven and earth had conspired to overthrow them, that room might be made for their opposers, who had no view but to purify and save.

Long before this, the same party, on design to blacken the government of king William, accused the earl of Ranelagh, paymaster of the army, &c. of having misapplied one and twenty millions. It was confidently said, that some millions of that money had been sent to Holland, great sums given to favourites, and greater to bribe members of parliament. Yet to the shame, though not to the silence of party, he accounted fairly for the application of the whole. His great employment was indeed his greatest guilt; he lost that employment, and a virtuous and eloquent patriot condescended to take one half of it, though he was wont to declare,

clare, that places and integrity were inconsistent things. There were more clamours about other accounts in that reign, all raised by the malecontents, and all as clearly refuted, upon a full and fair examination by the lords.

Party has neither honour nor mercy, else general charges against ministers would not be thus made at random; but it is usual for all malecontents to rail at the times, and at ministers, as the authors of such times. In the mouth of every man who is angry at the government, the nation is ruined; and this is the stile of all such men at all times. Remarkable were the words of Sir E——d S——r in the House of Commons many years ago: “ In short, Mr. Speaker, this nation is “ undone; Scotland is discontented, Ireland granted away, and the West-Indies “ a nest of pirates.” When afterwards he had got an employment, the face of our affairs did not appear to him so desperate, nor did he complain of the times, though the times were not changed, whatever he himself were.

Burnet observes truly enough, " That  
 " every cry against a minister is apt to be  
 " well entertained : some envy him,  
 " others are angry at him ; many hope  
 " to share in the spoils of him, or of his  
 " friends that fall with him ; and a love  
 " of change, and a wantonness of mind,  
 " makes the attacking a minister a diver-  
 " sion to the rest." Lord Somers, one of  
 the ablest and worthiest ministers that ever  
 this or any nation produced, was, in the  
 bitterness and extravagance of faction, ac-  
 cused, even as a confederate and sharer  
 with Kid, an infamous *pirate* and *robber*,  
 accused of it even in the House of Com-  
 mons ; and it was urged there as a reason  
 why he should be dismissed from his em-  
 ployment. " Such black constructions  
 " are men who are engaged in parties apt  
 " to make of the actions of those whom  
 " they intend to disgrace, even against  
 " their own consciences," says Burnet.  
 Did such wicked, such bitter usage of lord  
 Somers arise from a spirit of *patriotism* ?  
 Was it not rather the effect of the *foulest*  
 and most *desperate malice*, the rage of  
 party,

party, and the madness of opposition, so destructive of all candour and truth, and consequently of all *patriotism*?

I would by no means assert, or even suggest, that public spirit arises from private pique, or any idle narrow passion; but I will venture to say, that private passion often calls itself public spirit; and that very selfish and very foolish men call themselves patriots, and traduce others, much wiser and better than themselves, as enemies to their country. I doubt not but some oppose a just administration from good motives and a well-meaning intention; but I will venture to say, that many others concur with them upon low and contemptible inducements, and with a view to their own interest only, patriots for themselves, and public-spirited for private ends.

As to the present situation of liberty, and the condition of our government, I thank God I can find more causes of comfort than of fear or despair. For those who despair (if there be any of those) they are either such as grieve that they

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cannot



cannot change it, or they are such as take up their note and passion implicitly, and are afraid, because others bid them fear; or they are such, who having long indulged anger and spleen, see nothing but what is gloomy, portentous, and fearful. Others, of more penetration and clearer apprehension, though they may join in the cry of danger, and promote it, may be presumed not to be greatly in earnest, though they may think it expedient to seem so. This is a latitude which great men, the leaders of parties, generally allow themselves, to act the part most conducing to their ends, by assuming passions which they do not much feel, in order to hide passions which they really possess.

Was liberty ever so largely and so equally diffused amongst all orders of men, in any country as it is here, and now? Was it ever so powerfully felt and prevailing in former reigns, or in any commonwealth, past or present? Whence then can come its danger, if it has been continually increasing? I hope not from licentiousness; that is, from being too

great,

great, and therefore greatly abused. This would be dangerous indeed, dangerous to liberty itself; since liberty has been often betrayed, by turning it into wantonness, and by carrying it beyond such bounds as liberty itself, in order to last, will always want.

Such danger cannot arise from the nature of our constitution, the best framed of any upon earth to create and preserve liberty, unless it can be shewn that the balance of the legislature is broken, and one part master of the other; as when the parliament set aside the king, or when the king laid aside parliaments. These parts are now in perfect union; the king in possession of the prerogative, without stretching or abusing it, and every member free to vote as he pleases. It is not pretended that the parliament is too powerful for the crown; and I cannot see that the crown is too powerful for the parliament.

Neither can I see any danger to liberty from the characters of those employed in the administration. I see them do no arbitrary actions; I see them countenance

no slavish principles; I see them engaged in no desperate measures; I see them supported by men of as great probity and fortune, of as great abilities and independency as any in the three kingdoms; men as remarkable for their love of liberty and the constitution; men who abhor slavery, and all the ways of it, and would scorn to be slaves, or to suffer others to be so; and are therefore *good patriots*, in spite of slander, and all suggestions to the contrary. Nor is any man less a patriot for keeping an employment in a ministry which he approves, than he who dislikes the ministry because he has not an employment, if there be any such man. Neither can any thing more shew the passion and partiality of any man whatsoever, than to believe and suggest what we hear often suggested, that all places are infectious, all placemen criminal.

Can government exist without places, and men to fill them? Or do men ever reason thus but in their anger? And do they ever once reason thus, when they and their

their friends are in place? It is, therefore, very great rudeness and calumny, and a sort of phrensy, thus to traduce men in place, because they are in place. Though such calumny may be principally intended for *one man*, it is in effect thrown at every man who concurs with him in his measures; since if he and his measures be wicked, so are they who concur with him in them, as many of the best men and greatest subjects do. Let it therefore be considered how extensive and daring such calumny is.

There is a certain common proposition very much abused for want of being explained and understood, *That whatever has power to save a nation, has likewise power to destroy it*; which is true, when it is meant of one man, or a few men, invested with sovereign power. It is true of despotic princes who rule by mere will, and by armies depending upon their will; but it is not true of a nation preserving itself by laws of its own making, and power of its own keeping, or its own limiting, and by an army which it pays, and can, when



when it will, dismiss. Such a nation, and the numerous representatives of such a nation, can no more destroy themselves than we can suppose that any individual will destroy himself, which none do but such as are first mad.

Whoever is trusted with the public protection, must be trusted with the power of protecting; and whatever hath power to govern and protect the whole, that is, whoever have both the legislative and executive power, may certainly turn it to evil as well as to good, to oppress as well as to protect. Yet it doth not from hence follow that it will always be so abused and perverted; otherwise, all governments every where, even the freest that exist or can be framed, would be as bad as the worst and most violent; since all governments have equal power, that is, power unlimited, else they could not be called governments, which, in order to subsist and answer the ends of society, must be absolute over the governed. But the security, or the want of security, liberty or slavery, arises from the manner of placing this



this power, equally supreme in all perfect governments. Our monarchy, and every part of the legislature, is limited; but the legislature entire is unlimited, and its power as ample and extensive as that of the Great Turk over the lives, persons, and properties of men. The great difference is, that we have numerous representatives and legislators, who are themselves parties and sharers in whatever they wisely or weakly establish and ordain for the whole. This is the best and only caution men can have that their governors do not abuse and oppress them. Whereas the Great Turk, being himself the state and representative of the state, and there being no restraint to check his worst passions and follies, no certain security, and no sort of regular liberty can ever be expected from his government.

This, therefore, is an objection against government itself in any shape, that *being able to save implies an ability to destroy*, since every government must have such ability; but no government well modelled can ever have such inclination. Where  
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the legislators are numerous, and interested in the preservation of the whole, they will, for their own sakes, preserve the whole. Some of them may be weak, some corrupt, all of them may possibly be mistaken; but it is not probable they will sacrifice themselves, by sacrificing their own and public liberty. There may be an exception or two to this rule; but a few exceptions rather strengthen than weaken general rules.

To conclude this head, supreme power does and must, always and every where, infer *all power*, with the *absolute* direction, application, and delegation of that power; and ever happiest is that country and those people where it is most naturally distributed and balanced, where the governing and the governed are equally interested in the preservation of each other.

I now proceed to some observations and advice concerning party-writings.

One particular consideration should accompany all the actions of men, namely, *that they be moral*; especially where such actions

actions affect others; more especially if they affect many; above all, if they affect society in general. And as all writings which are addressed to the public do so, it is greatly incumbent upon the writers, and their duty, as honest men and good citizens, to take strict care that what they write be honest and fair, as well as useful and important. This is the purpose, this the morality of writing, and all men of good minds will religiously observe it; if they do not, they are most certainly no patriots.

This rule, which must be allowed a just one, is too little regarded, commonly quite neglected or violated, as in many instances, so particularly in party-writings, which, instead of doing public good, and instructing the people, too often mislead them, misrepresent men, falsify things, and do popular injustice and mischief. Indeed, during the strife of two parties, it is almost impossible to meddle with either, and yet please both. The very word implies partiality in substance as well as in sound. If you say that they

are both wrong, even when they are most apparently so, you offend both. If you vindicate one, though upon the best grounds, you disoblige the other; for reason and truth are not the rules by which they judge of each other. Those whom we wish to be always in the wrong, we are ready to think always in the wrong, and therefore are not very willing to own them in the right, even when they are in the right. When, therefore, this party-spirit prevails, which is often raised and spread by immoral and party writings, it is a difficult and perhaps an unacceptable task to attempt to restore mutual peace and charity, with the exercise of calm reason, and the love of truth, though it be a task worthy of a *real patriot*.

Party is too apt to raise the passions, and to keep them continually awake; and when men are in a heat, they are not so well qualified to reason as to rail; and thence it is that party-writings are generally fierce, spiteful, full of misrepresentations and false characters, framed not to convince opponents, but to mortify and provoke



provoke them ; not to inform the people, but to incense and frighten them. What can be more immoral than this ? What more dishonest, and indeed contemptible, when their whole or chief merit consists in propagating falshood and injustice, in raising false alarms, and abusing popular credulity ? It is, therefore, no wonder that such writings, though they may prevail and be popular for a while, sink into oblivion, as soon as the uproar which raised them, or which they raised, is over.

Who now reads or even knows Le-  
strange's Observators, or Defoe's Reviews,  
or Lellie's Rehearsals, or the Examiners,  
with a shoal of other writings, all of  
much noise and some esteem in their  
day ? I dare say, that many of the pre-  
sent generation never heard of their  
names. As they were solely confined to  
party and party-quarrels, and allied only  
to the squabble of the times, they pe-  
rished with time, and with party-heats.  
Though people be partial to such writings  
for a time, when their passions are afloat,



and when they have marked out particular men as their darlings or their aversion, they generally do them justice at last ; and both false invective and false panegyric die with the persons on whom they were bestowed, frequently before them.

Writings which meddle with the public, should go upon a foundation and principle as wide and diffusive as the public. Men of sense will never believe, that writings which descend to spite and personalities, can be disinterested or candid, or pursue public good only. Public spirit considers nothing but what has relation to the public ; and it is needless and ridiculous to enter into personalities, where a man's public actions are sufficient to condemn him. If the punishment of public guilt be all that is aimed at, why should we fall upon his person or private affairs, which bear no relation to the public ?

It is indeed a strong presumption, when a man's private character is attacked, that his public character is innocent. No just judge, distinguished either by good understanding or good breeding, ever treated the

the greatest criminal with rage or bitter words : nor does any wise and polite man deal in such on any occasion : nor is it at all needful to those who attend only to facts, and the proofs of guilt or innocence.

What else is the reason that low and ignorant writers are generally abusive, but that they want matter and manners ? Besides, the road of abuse is so common, and so easy, that it requires no genius, or any one good quality or accomplishment to pursue it. Any creature that can speak, can lie and call names ; and the lowest, the most foolish, and most vicious of our race, excel most in it.

The *morality of writing* ought to be considered and attended to by all who write, in whatever they write, that their writings be true, candid, and useful ; that they treat others as they would have others treat them, and that for every proposition which they advance, for every conclusion or character which they draw, they can answer to God, to the world, and to their own conscience.

If this reasonable rule of the *morality of writings* were observed, how much good would it produce, how much evil prevent? It would certainly bring great quiet to the public and to particulars, and greatly promote peace, charity, and honesty. Nothing can be more dishonest or more cowardly, than for a man to sit safely and covertly in his closet, and from thence, as from a citadel, assault the tender characters of men with vile slander and aspersions, whether he do it by descriptions, innuendos, false parallels, or any other way. The world is prone to censure, and to believe evil of the best and most innocent men, whenever it is charged upon them by the worst; and he must be the wickedest of all creatures, who scatters reproaches to hurt the harmless, and charges any man whomsoever with any unjust imputations whatsoever. It is still an aggravation of such wickedness, when by it public uproar and discontents are raised, and the people are inflamed and terrified by a torrent of slander and calumnies cast upon their governors. *True patriotism*

*triotism* abhors all this, and, were it attended to, would cure it.

There is a natural rectitude in the mind of an honest man, a love of justice and truth, and an abhorrence of whatever is unrighteous and untrue. And the same honesty of heart which determines a man to be just in his private dealings, will influence and direct his public conduct; and he will be full as tender of injuring the character, and misrepresenting the actions of *public men*, as those of his *private neighbours*.

This rule cannot but be useful and agreeable to all who study to write like true *patriots*, divested of passion and of party-spirit, and by this rule let the patriotism of writers (writers on both sides) be tried.



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